

EXHIBIT A

Brijesh Goel
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October 15, 2023

The Honorable P. Kevin Castel
Daniel Patrick Moynihan United States Courthouse
500 Pearl St.
New York, NY 10007-1312

Re: United States vs. Goel

Dear Judge Castel:

Thank you for taking time to read my personal statement.

I am deeply ashamed and regretful for my actions that lead me to appear before you. During the trial, I came to better understand and recognize how and why I should have been more diligent in maintaining the vital confidentiality required by my position at Goldman Sachs. I failed in my responsibility to adhere to the proper level of care required for guarding non-public material information I received in my position at the firm. I am extremely sorry, first and foremost to Goldman Sachs for failing at the duties I was entrusted with, to the US Government, investors in the financial markets, and my colleagues, friends, and family members. I have no excuse for my conduct, and I apologize for my objectionable behavior.

I chose to go to trial because I wanted you, Your Honor, and the court to hear my side of the story. But as the trial progressed, I realized the extent of the damage I had caused, and I was horrified. I wish I had the courage to change my plea to guilty at that time, but I didn't. I am deeply sorry for not coming to terms with my personal accountability sooner. I am grateful to Your Honor and the jury for your service and have gained a special appreciation for the legal, due process afforded me, even though I am not even a citizen of this amazing country. I was found guilty, fully accept the verdict, acknowledge my guilt, and stand ready to accept my punishment.

I feel highly disappointed in myself for ruining a lifetime reputation for solid work and a strong ethical background due to my lapses in judgment. I have spent months examining the exact nature of my destructive actions. I have sought guidance and mental health counseling to understand how I got so far off track in this case. I pray that Your Honor might appreciate that this case represents only a small por-

tion of my life and that you might consider tempering judgment with mercy as you learn more about me in this letter where I share my family background, personal insights, and further reflections on my criminal conduct.

Childhood:

I was born in India on September 17, 1984, to Jagdish and Kusum Goel. I have one older brother, Akhilesh, and two older sisters, Pooja and Shelley.

My parents were born and raised in a small town in northern India right before India's independence. My father had ten siblings and was the only one in his family to obtain a college degree and find a fruitful career. He worked most of his life as an engineering officer for the state's electricity department, which required him to move to a different location every few months. In the beginning, my mother had our family follow him around, but they eventually decided to have our family settle in one place. My father would return every other weekend.

As the most financially successful person in his family, my father felt highly obligated to care for his siblings, paying for many cousins' educations. My father's penchant to help others left our nuclear family financially strapped.

My father struggled to cope with his financial difficulties and the absence of my mother, siblings, and me through heavy drinking. My mother became severely depressed and openly discussed suicide to cope with her anxiety. These extreme challenges led to household tensions and frequent fights between my parents. I recall deliberately playing the role of a comedian to lighten the mood at home. The days when my mother laughed and felt joy due to my silly acts were truly special to me, as they made me feel like I was making a difference. My father occasionally beat my older brother, but as the youngest, my older sisters protected me. However, when no one was watching, my brother would take his frustrations out on me. I lived in constant fear, unsure of how he might react on any given day.

I could sense that my brother was himself going through his own struggles and hence I never really blamed him for his punishing acts and accepted the suffering in silence, as part of life. Those early childhood experiences left me longing for a relationship with someone who genuinely cared for me, unconditionally.

When I was in the ninth grade, my father had heart issues requiring a stent. He wanted to sell some land he supposedly inherited, only to learn that his siblings sold his portion and used the money. We had no way to pay the medical bills, and my father felt horribly betrayed by his family, whom he greatly sacrificed to support. That was the first time our family was in debt, and it took years to recover financially. The entire experience took a huge toll on all of us, as my father imparted the

harshly learned lesson of trusting friends more than family. That lesson was discussed often inside our house, and I embraced it and vowed to become someone who my friends could rely on in their difficult times.

Education and Major Transformation:

My early education began in a poor public school with limited resources. My parents couldn't afford the bus, so I used to bike 7-8 miles to get to school. I developed an extremely timid and shy personality and earned average grades in the early part of my middle school days. However, through hard work and the realization that I needed to perform better to improve my family's financial situation in the long run, I improved my academic performance dramatically in the sixth grade.

My oldest sister did well in school and took me under her wing. She would change the clock in our home and wake me at four in the morning, telling me it was six in the morning so I'd have more time to study, as she rode me daily to do my coursework. My parents' money would go toward paying for weddings for my older sisters, which was our custom. Over the next 2-3 years, I became one of the top three students in my grade. All my teachers were shocked by the rapid transformation.

In high school, I also joined my mother in volunteering at the local Senior Care Center (Janak Seva Samiti), which she involved herself in to try and stave off her depression. I thoroughly enjoyed being of service and hearing life stories from people who had been abandoned with little outside contact or support.

I also worked in high school, breaking a traditional custom in our home town. Unlike in the United States, working in high school was frowned upon and considered embarrassing. I chose not to let that affect me and found work in nearby restaurants as a greeter, cutting vegetables and doing whatever they needed.

Fellow students initially teased me about this but then found jobs themselves, as they saw me gain my financial independence. I learned English from watching American movies and walking customers through the restaurant menus as I had seen on the screen. My bosses gave me accolades for helping improve their customer service. I developed a strong work ethic and discipline to complement my hard work in school, lessons that would be invaluable throughout my life.

As a high school senior, I was the leader of the student body and participated in debate competitions. I aspired to attend the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), India's most prestigious university. Each year, nearly two million students apply, and less than one-fifth of one percent are accepted. I began studying advanced physics and math at age fifteen to prepare for the rigorous admissions process.

My acceptance was a moment of immense joy and pride for me and my parents. However, this joyous occasion was bittersweet, as my father was hospitalized on the same day due to his worsening heart condition. I felt cheated, as if the happiest moment of my life was being stolen from me and my father, who was most invested in my success. His heart problems continue, and he recently underwent open-heart surgery in December 2022. I have been unable to visit him, but I pray for leniency so that I may return to India and see him as soon as Your Honor deems appropriate.

Young Adulthood:

When I started at IIT, I was surrounded by the best students from all over India. I initially struggled to adjust to the new environment and got involved in too many extracurricular activities, which resulted in average grades (6.5-7.5 out of 10). In the third semester, I transformed again, hyper-focusing on my studies and achieving a grade point average of 9.0 or above.

To reduce the financial burden on my parents and to pursue my passion for helping younger children reach their full potential, I started teaching students in the local town while I was in college. I developed a following of 50-60 students, half of whom were underprivileged, so I taught them for free.

Professional Career in India:

In 2007, as investment banks were just entering the Indian market, I developed a passion for finance. I decided to self-study while working full-time at General Electric as a design engineer and earned the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation. After attending a series of networking events and interviewing at multiple financial institutions in India, my hard work paid off and I landed a job as an analyst at HSBC India. After one year, I moved to Deutsche Bank, where I stayed until 2012.

While working at Deutsche Bank, I typically worked until 9 or 10 pm, which left me little time to attend social gatherings. By 2009, I had realized that while my college provided a great education, its remote location limited opportunities for students to network with industry professionals and gain the exposure critical for career advancement. I felt a duty to improve the system so that younger students wouldn't face the same challenges I did in getting proper guidance.

Outside of my extremely hectic work environment, I used my free time to develop an alumni portal for students at my former college, IIT. Nothing like this existed in India at the time. This volunteer project took almost three years to become opera-

tional due to government bureaucracy, but it proved to be a huge success that continues to benefit students today.

In 2010, as a continuation of my passion for teaching and education, I began teaching financial courses on the weekends for Neev Knowledge Management, a private education start-up in India, becoming one of their youngest instructors at age twenty-four. Teaching brought me true joy as I prepared my own lectures and gave classes on weekends instead of engaging in more leisurely activities like my colleagues. I sent the extra money I earned back home to my parents, who continued to struggle financially.

Coming to America:

By 2012, I realized I needed to move to the United States to advance my career. I networked extensively and had phone calls with at least hundred students who had completed their graduate courses in finance in the US. I scored well in the standardized tests for graduate studies (GRE and GMAT) and my senior managers at HSBC and Deutsche Bank supported my ambition and wrote recommendation letters for me, which allowed me to gain acceptance into the UC Berkley Master's program for Finance. I developed many great relationships at Berkeley, including one with the head of the department running the finance program, who I am fortunate enough to still have as a mentor.

After twenty rounds of interviews over two months at Berkeley, I was finally offered a position at Goldman Sachs in New York. I felt incredibly fortunate to be given the opportunity to work at such a prestigious financial institution, and I knew that my years of hard work had finally paid off. My parents were immensely proud of me.

Once my career was secure, I started looking for a life partner to build and grow my life in the United States. I started dating Natasha Garg, who was then a gynecologist at a top hospital in India. We had always known each other since we were younger, and we admired each other's passion and ambition. Eventually, our friendship blossomed into love, and Natasha and I were married in 2014.

I was raised in the Hindu faith. We had a small shrine in our home, and when I was young, we went to the local Ganesh Temple every week. In New York, Natasha and I continued the tradition and occasionally went to the Lord Krishna Temple in Queens together, as it was a way for us to bond as a couple.

As I was fortunate enough to be living in this amazing country with my beautiful wife and boundless career opportunities, I felt that it was all because of my parents' sacrifices and access to quality education. Therefore, I felt a deep desire to give back by working for Akanksha, a non-profit organization focused on educating underpriv-

ileged children in India. I volunteered for four years before becoming a board member in late 2021. I held this position until my indictment, during which time I raised over \$80,000 in charitable contributions, including personal donations. Additionally, I sent money home to help support my family, wanting to share my good fortune.

Professional Career in the United States:

Right from the beginning, I worked hard and put in late hours at my job at Goldman Sachs. I started as an associate in Goldman's risk management division and was promoted within a year to Vice President in 2014. I regularly finished projects ahead of schedule and sought for a more challenging role within the firm that could allow me to make a direct impact to the firm's business and connect with global business leaders. I saw Investment Banking as that role. I decided to use my net-working skills again to find a position better suited for me.

I was riding in the elevator with a senior executive at the firm and asked if I could join him for coffee, which eventually resulted in a long-lasting mentor relationship. He taught me a considerable amount about American values and systems. He started at the mailroom at Goldman and explained how he'd find out who he needed to talk to and would email weekly until he got a meeting. He told me persistence paid off, and there was no need to be embarrassed. His mentorship had a significant impact on me.

At Goldman, I noticed that when people work past 10 p.m., they order food, which arrives in the same area. I waited around to meet investment bankers. I spoke with them, followed up with emails, and took over one hundred meetings trying to transition into investment banking. After one and one-half years of trying, a partner at the firm decided to give me an offer. I felt so excited that all my hard work paid off.

Investment banking was a huge shock since I was expected to work from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m., including weekends, and sometimes for thirty-six hours straight. I was working on transformational transactions which helped save companies from bankruptcies, thereby saving jobs and got an opportunity to meet visionary leaders at the top global corporations across the planet. I was truly happy with my job.

In 2021, I moved from Goldman Sachs to Apollo Global Management, which is considered as the top-tier investment fund in the finance industry. I got the job based on my hard work and reputation built over eight years at Goldman. I worked exceptionally diligently at Apollo and felt it was an extension of the highly demanding environment I came from. I worked nights and weekends but thoroughly enjoyed what I did. My job was to think of innovative ways to deploy capital, and I thrived in the position until my indictment was issued.

A Challenging Home Life:

Natasha and I entered our marriage excited about our relationship but full of personal ambition. Natasha had to work extremely hard to re-qualify as a doctor in New York, just as I entered investment banking. Between our schedules, we hardly saw each other, and when we did, we were exhausted. We became estranged. I also traveled extensively for the deals, which put a further strain on our marriage.

During this time, I became closer to Akshay Niranjana. Despite being four years younger than me, Akshay and I became friends due to our common connections as students at Berkeley and our mutual heritage. Moreover, Akshay struggled in his relationship, just as I was struggling in mine with Natasha. We bonded over common backgrounds and similar experiences. I also always wished I had a brother who I would treat better than my brother treated me. I saw Akshay in that way, someone I could confide in and trust, since I had no one else serving that role in my life.

Then Covid hit, and Natasha had to work brutal hours. Seeing the news of deaths across the globe and in her hospital, I was afraid for her life. We decided to work on our relationship and fight the uncertainty of COVID together. As my workload and travel schedule eased at Goldman due to the pandemic, I took-up cooking and prepared a copious amount of food for Natasha and her fellow frontline coworkers.

Natasha and I both love kids, and have always dreamt about having a family one day where we can raise kids with best values and give them opportunities that we didn't have as a child. In late 2021, Natasha was unfortunately diagnosed with an auto-immune disease, Sjogren, which has interfered with our ability to have a child. We have been trying and deeply desire to have a family. It's something we want to pursue when I return home.

My Crime:

My crime completely hinges on my relationship with Akshay, although, to be clear, I do not blame him in any way for my actions. I must be held accountable for my bad choices. However, I believe it's important for Your Honor to have insight into how and why I came to make such poor decisions, and as I have struggled to come to terms with my deplorable actions, I realize that my relationship with Akshay played a critical role.

I clearly should have better protected the information I was privy to as an employee at Goldman. At the beginning, I did, but over time, I let my guard down as Akshay became my confidante. In some ways we had a closer relationship than I did with Natasha, as we started sharing our respective personal and professional struggles. For my entire life, I had no one with whom I could discuss personal issues.

Having grown up in India and graduated from IIT, came with a huge responsibility to only demonstrate my success. I had to be infallible. That left me feeling lonely and frustrated, unable to even have those kinds of discussions with my wife. Akshay was more open. He gained my trust more than anyone in my life. I worked long hours and we spent what little free time I had together. We swam together, did self-improvement activities, drank, smoked marijuana and frequently discussed markets, entrepreneurs leading large companies of our time, economics, and finances. Those subjects were our passion and during these discussion I discussed my ambitions, accomplishments and struggles at work, including office politics but I now realize I should have kept my professional life separate from personal. I crossed the line and I own it.

I also shared work related information with Akshay. At the outset, it was just innocent conversation, from my perspective. The conversation flowed as a natural extension of our conversations about finance. While my initial intent had nothing to do with profiting from this relationship, my relationship with Akshay devolved into a direct breach of law and my firm's compliance policy. I cannot even begin to explain how badly I feel about this severe breach of the law.

I also regret foolishly compounding my problems by suggesting that Akshay delete certain texts between us. I panicked upon learning about a federal investigation. It was the most terrifying thing that had ever happened to me. I was in a state of shock and made another grave error in judgment. After calming down, I tried undoing my error by asking Akshay not to delete but it was too late. I feared the implications of how those texts would be interpreted, and my fears were made even worse given the fact that my obstruction of justice charge cast a pall on the primary charges against me. I own the responsibility for this inexcusable behavior.

Conclusion:

I am incredibly remorseful, wondering how I could have acted so destructively. I am profoundly sorry for wasting law enforcement's time when exercising greater self-control could have avoided all this. I was reckless in handling the confidential information I was entrusted with. The saddest part was that I didn't even need the additional money. I earned a good living and enjoyed a comfortable life. Regardless, I committed a crime and must pay the price. The buck stops with me.

For the last fifteen months since the indictment, I have woken up every day in the middle of night, looking at the ceiling, and thinking about my life's journey. I have wondered about what led me to making these mistakes and how these mistakes will haunt me for the rest of my life. My friends and my therapist have often asked me about what I regret most and whether I feel remorse, leaving me pondering the es-

sence of my identity. Perhaps due to my upbringing, I bottled up past remorse and thought saying it out loud would be pretentious. But over the months since the indictment, I have learned and realized that I have a duty to not only admit my mistakes but also to reflect and make amends by expressing my remorse and regret clearly to ensure others can learn from my mistakes.

To that end, I wrote this heartfelt letter to this Honorable Court. I am also working with the professor (my mentor) at UC Berkeley, providing lectures on White Collar Crime and creating a course that can be shared through the University of California's higher education system. I want to amend my mistakes and teach people the critical importance of compliance. I'm teaching that if you're given confidential information, it's sacrosanct for you to protect it. I also tell people just to cooperate when the government comes to them and to not discuss the case with others because it will backfire. I use my story as a cautionary tale, showing them life before and after the indictment. I have also been saving money towards making restitution and plan on doing my utmost to fully and promptly complete my restitution once it has been finalized by this Honorable Court.

Since I was convicted, I have worked at five different charities to find meaning in my life and make amends for my mistakes. I have split my time between:

- (i) CHIPS, a soup kitchen feeding the homeless in the park slope area in Brooklyn;
- (ii) Encore Community Services, a senior care facility where every week, I meet two senior citizens at their respective homes to talk and help them go for a walk in the park;
- (iii) Helping Hands for the Disabled, where I meet a visually impaired person, on a weekly basis for 3-4 hours, helping them complete their chores (such as shopping for essentials), reading them books and delivering meals to other disabled members in the organization;
- (iv) the Borgen Project, fighting against global poverty and hunger; where I work 12hrs/ week as a writer / journalist and I am focused on raising awareness about the power of technology in solving the issue of global poverty, and
- (v) Rescuing Leftover Cuisine ("RLC"), where I volunteer 20 hrs per week splitting my time between working as a rescuer i.e. getting excess food from bakeries and restaurants and taking them to Churches and Homeless Shelters. I also volunteer as a 'Branch Operations Intern' where I help expand RLC's branches across US and recruit more volunteers.

Volunteering has helped me reprioritize my life. I went to and graduated from IIT and Berkeley, and I was hired for high-level positions at top firms. This gave me a distorted sense of reality, perhaps even a sense of entitlement. My legal ordeal was a humbling experience that helped me reorient my life. I now long to return to teaching, like I did earlier in my career. I was so happy in that position and pas-

sionate about what I did. I want to directly help people as part of my amends, and I want to make a positive impact on the world. To that end, I recently completed a life coaching certification in strategies for Entrepreneurship and Business from Transformation Academy.

After my expected deportation upon completion of my sentence, I want to open an education institute in India to focus on providing opportunity to the less fortunate, so they can have the same opportunities that I had, despite my humble upbringing.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Brijesh Goel